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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated international attitudes of American students from six U.S. universities as related to number of semesters on campus, campus density of international students, and university involvement in international education programs, especially study abroad programs. An instrument was developed which evaluated student attitudes in seven areas including cultural pluralism, worldmindedness, international career aspirations, and political liberalism. The 42-item questionnaire was distributed to 2,400 students, with a response rate of 45% (N=1,065). Major findings indicated that students who spent one to five semesters on campus exhibited more cultural acceptance, were more world minded, had more international career aspirations, demonstrated a greater understanding of U.S. culture, and showed higher interest in international activities than did students who spent six or more semesters on campus. Discussion suggests these findings result from the fact that relatively few students participate in study abroad programs and that freshman and sophomore students are more likely to interact with international students and participate in study abroad programs than junior or senior students. Among recommendations are that more students be encouraged to take advantage of study abroad programs, that a mechanism for better integration of international and U.S. students be developed, and that governmental and other organizations continue to financially support the promotion of international educational activities. Contains 14 references. (GLR)

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THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION UPON UNITED STATES STUDENTS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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THE IMPACT OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION UPON U.S. STUDENTS IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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Institutional involvement in international education programs contribute to changes in U. S. students attitude toward international issues. This study is based on the institutions involvement in comparative international education programs, including U.S. study abroad and the density of international population from more than one hundred nations on U.S. campuses. One thousand and sixty-five U.S. students were surveyed from six senior universities in the U.S.. Of the seven areas tested, six were found to be significantly important in U.S. student attitudes toward international and comparative educational issues. They were: cosmopolitan world outlook, cultural pluralism, worldmindedness, understanding of U.S. culture, support of internationalism, and international career aspirations. Furthermore, U.S. students who spent five or less semesters on campus interacted significantly better on international comparative education issues as compared to U.S. students who spent six or more semesters on campus.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most remarkable post-war developments in higher education has been the great surge of interest and participation in education outside the boundaries of one's country. Colleges and universities all over the world have long drawn some of their distinguished faculty members from among those who have been educated in other countries. National universities became international to a greater degree because of exchange programs and international study centers. A large number of United States students and faculty went overseas to teach, study, research, and travel.

In a recent statement of priorities to then President-elect Clinton, NAFSA President Janet Constantinides commented:

> The number of foreign students studying in our country has climbed from approximately 20,000 at the end of World War II to more than 400,000 today.
>
> More than one third of the one-million-plus individuals who receive all or part of their higher education in another country receive it in the United States.
>
> These students have become an important academic resource for institutions of higher education, and according to the United States Department of Commerce, an economic resource for the country: they contribute more then $5 billion annually to the American economy and the United States balance of trade. (NAFSA Newsletter, February 1993, pp 1,4)

Ms. Constantinides concluded that "...exchange programs have become critical for the United States, enhancing our ability to lead in world affairs and enriching the quality of United States higher education." (NAFSA Newsletter, February 1993, p 1) Therefore, internationalization of higher education is a necessary phenomenon.

The four important areas emphasized under internationalizing undergraduate and graduate studies are: language and area studies, study and work abroad, comparative and interdisciplinary studies, and graduate and professional programs (Sanders and Ward, 1970).

LANGUAGE AND AREA STUDIES

These studies include political science, history, literature, sociology, and the indigenous vernacular of the regions or the countries of concern. International understanding can be achieved through language and area studies. The rationale for this is clearly stated in the President's Commission Report of Foreign Language and International Studies:

> ...the interdependence of skills and content is the central concept of the essentials of education... As they (students) learn about their world and its heritage, they necessarily deepen their skills in language and reasoning and acquire the basis for emotional, aesthetic, and social growth. They also become aware of the world around them and develop an understanding and appreciation of the interdependence of the many facets of that world. (Bullard, 1980, p 100)

This indicates that sensitization to another culture is important to understand one's own cultural similarity and diversity. By understanding one's own world and heritage as well as the world and heritage of other cultures, United States students are able to gain a global frame of mind.

STUDY AND WORK ABROAD

These activities include the study of cultural, language, political, social, economic, and environmental phenomena. United States students go abroad for independent study as well as to serve as interns or to participate in practical training programs

in a number of fields. According to Montagne, study and work abroad allow young people "to bring back the characteristics of those nations and their manners of living, and to rub and file our wits against those of others". (Ives, 1925, p 205) The rationale of study and work abroad is that it will:

> ...strengthen the interest and competence of our colleges...in foreign language and international topics. For students, whatever their fields of interest, carefully planned experience abroad can have a life-long impact on values and on concern for understanding of other cultures. (Strength through Wisdom, 1979, p 102)

Foreign languages and international topics may be important in terms of the personal experience of living in another culture and interacting with nationals of another country. Auden (1937) states "No one can understand his own country unless he has lived in at least two others." (Burn, 1980, p 73) This provides another rationale for study-and-work-abroad programs.

COMPARATIVE AND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

These studies include population, peace, conflict, and the like. The rationale is that:

> These studies have also proved to be a successful vehicle in globalizing training, and research can also be used as a tool for globalizing theories and attitudes. The "infusion" of discipline through the introduction of international content is an approach that has been systematically adopted by a number of scholars and even professional societies. (The International Encyclopedia of Higher Education, 1977, p. 2296)

Thus, the immersion of the United States student in different areas of foreign studies such as social, cultural, political, language, and the like broadens their international horizons,

helps them to understand the interdependence of nations, and makes them better understand the world in which they live.

GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

The graduates hired by a number of multinational corporations to perform successful work in their fields have been experiencing "cultural shock" (Cleveland, 1960) and have had difficulty adjusting to a new environment. Their technical and cross-cultural adjustment to the new environment is insufficient. They encounter a "variety of customs, values, systems, attitudes, and work habits which make it difficult...to move comfortably in a foreign commercial environment". (Stessin, 1973, p 23) The theoretical rationale for the need for internationalizing graduate studies is stated clearly:

> ...most future graduates and professionals will have to function increasingly in collaboration with peers from other cultures...technology, industry, and business will be conducted increasingly in a trans-national cultural setting. It is argued, therefore, that graduates must be culturally and internationally sensitized during their training year so that they can cope with adjustment to the sociocultural differences inherent in a particular mission or negotiation. (The International Encyclopedia of Higher Education, 1977, p 2296).

This clearly reflects that organizational, technical, language, and cross-cultural skills are needed by United States graduates to function successfully in careers in government, business, teaching, and many other fields.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Questions such as what do international education programs do to U.S. students, how much cultural exchange takes place in contact with persons whose ways, thoughts, and actions are different, and the like, have been raised philosophically, but one looks in vain for factual answers to these questions.

Measures that may be used to define the U.S. students' interest in overseas programs, their overseas occupational interests, their participation in educational exchange programs for students and for professors, their perceptions of international students on U.S. campuses, their enrollment in foreign-area studies in American universities and overseas, and their involvement in cross-cultural relations are ill-defined. The lack of information on these questions is of particular concern to the educators. Moreover, the assumption that international education programs and the presence of international students on the campuses of U.S. colleges and universities will lead to a better understanding and broadening effect upon U.S. students is yet to be validated.

The general thesis of this research is to establish a positive relationship between the U. S. students' international attitude formation based on the number of semesters they attend on their campuses. Within the scope of this main objective, two specific research questions were developed. They are:

1. Does on-campus population density of international students have an impact on U.S. students' international attitudes?

2. Does the involvement of the university in international education programs specially study abroad have an impact on U. S. students' international attitudes?

Therefore, it is the intent of this study to identify, explore, and analyze this unexamined area.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The subjects for this study were selected from six senior universities. The institutions were selected because they varied in their involvement in international education programs as shown in the publication "Academic Year Abroad, 1987-88" (Institute of International Education, 1987a), and in their on-campus international student density as shown in the publication of "Open Doors, 1987-88" (Institute of International Education, 1987b).

INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

1. The development of a **cosmopolitan world outlook** that transcends local loyalties and values toward a greater cosmopolitan perspective.
2. The acceptance of **cultural pluralism** by exhibiting a willingness to permit peaceful coexistence of people from different cultural and social backgrounds.
3. The adoption of a **worldmindedness** that enables the student to observe, analyze, evaluate, and participate in a worldwide social system.
4. The **maturation of their understanding** of their own cultural patterns, backgrounds, and problems.

5. The **extension of their understanding** to support the exchange of materials, techniques, and people on an international scale.
6. An **elaboration of career aspirations** to include international dimensions.
7. The minimization of established tradition to be replaced by a receptivity to innovative transactions between different cultures through a **political liberalism**.

For each of these seven major areas, ten questions were developed to measure each concept. These questions were submitted to a panel of nine senior faculty members from diverse disciplines and with extensive experience in international education. Each panel member was given a definition of the concept and then asked to assign each question to one of the definitions. Only those questions were retained where five or more panel members agreed as to its placement. Those retained questions were then randomly included in a pilot questionnaire along with demographic and international biographic experience questions and were administered to 35 students. Several questions were dropped because students without overseas experience reported them to be meaningless to them.

The final instrument used for this study contained 42 questions: eight questions that measured the cosmopolitan concept; four questions for cultural pluralism; five questions each for international career aspirations and understanding of their own culture; six questions each of which measured the

concepts of worldmindedness, support for internationalism, and political liberalism.

DATA RETURN

Four hundred questionnaires were mailed to contact persons at each of four institutions. The researchers administered 400 questionnaires at each of two institutions. The contact persons returned 583 questionnaires that were combined with the 486 questionnaires administered by the researchers. Thus, of the 2,400 questionnaires distributed, 1,065 were completed, for a return rate of 45 percent.

DATA ANALYSIS

For each of the seven conceptual areas, an index was computed by summing those questions that pertained to the conceptual area and dividing the sum by the number of questions answered. The questions used a six-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A high-mean index score represented a positive response position favorable to international education. The nearer the mean index score was to six, the more positive the response.

The grouping variable, semesters on campus, was computed by summing item on the questionnaire which ask for the number of semesters U. S. students have attended classes on their campus. The summed scores were then categorized into two groups. Those U. S. students who attended classes from one to five semesters were placed in the first category. Those U. S. students who attended classes for six or more semesters on their campuses were placed in second category. The differences between groups were tested using

the analysis of variance F-ratio statistics. Significance was set at the .05 alpha level. The one-way analysis of variance was used to determine whether any group varied in its response patterns. This was determined by comparing the variance of responses within each group with the variance of all respondents through the use of the F-ratio and its corresponding probability of differences. Traditionally, any probability larger than .05 is discarded.

SAMPLE DESCRIBED

The demographic characteristics of the 1,065 students used in this study are shown in Figure 3. From Figure 3 it can be seen that male students made up 58.8 percent and female students made up 40.4 percent of the group. It is also evident from Figure 4 that 75.9 percent of the respondents indicated that their parents' socioeconomic status was in the medium category, whereas 17.3 percent and 4.8 percent indicated that their parents' socioeconomic status was in the high and low categories, respectively. On the questions of parents' education (Figure 5), 57.8 percent indicated that their fathers went to college and 34.7 percent said that their mothers went to college. Furthermore, in regard to the place of residence (Figure 6), 47.3 percent indicated that they lived in a small city as compared to those who said that they lived in rural (30.6 percent) and urban (22.1 percent) areas.

Table 1 gives the distribution of the 1,065 U.S. students by age, their membership in international organizations within the U.S., their membership in international organizations outside the U.S., their participation in international cultural activities on

Figure 3 is the first of five figures which appear in this paper. Communication with the author.

FIGURE 3

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS:
MALE AND FEMALE

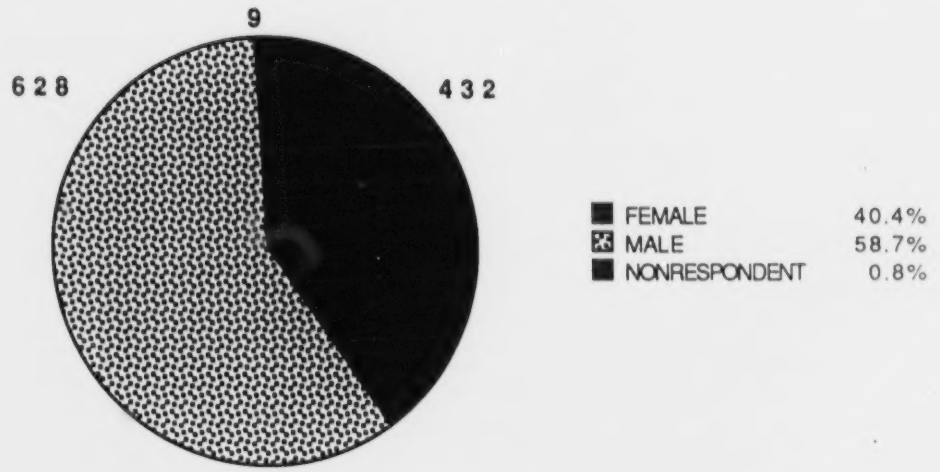


FIGURE 4

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS:
PARENTS SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

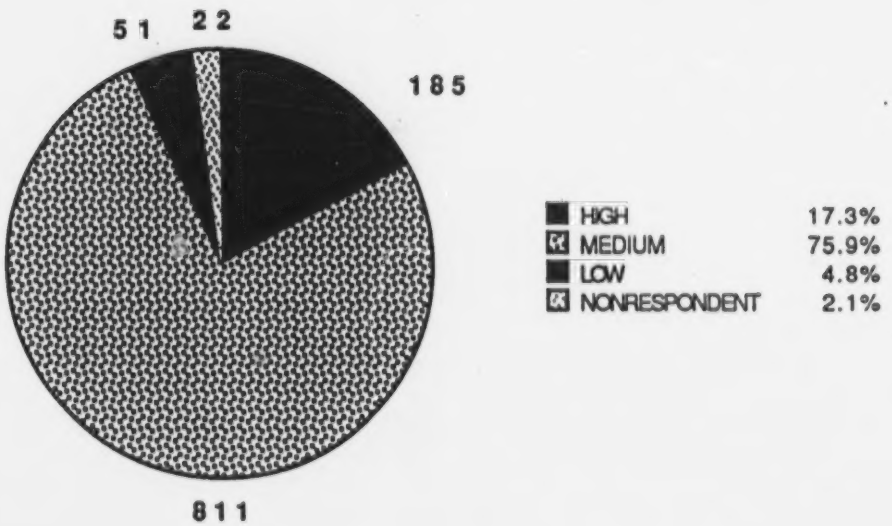


FIGURE 5

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS:
PARENTS EDUCATION

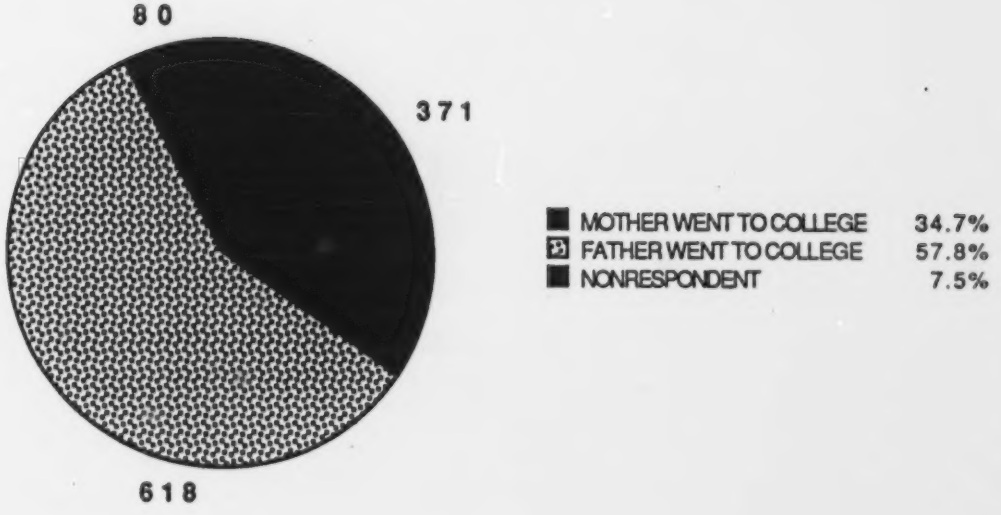


FIGURE 6

DEMOGRAPBIC CHARACTERISTICS:
PLACE OF RESIDENCE

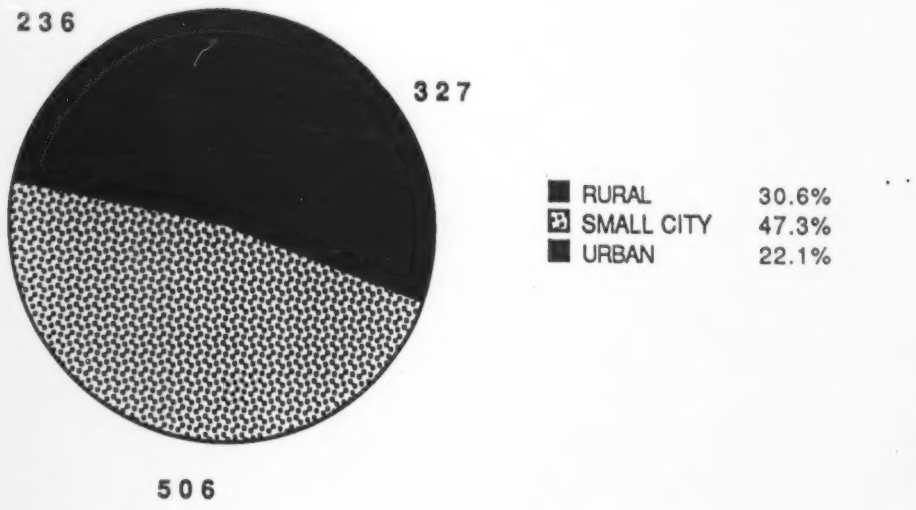


TABLE 1

AGE, TIME ON CAMPUS, ORGANIZATIONAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES DATA OF THE 1,069 U.S. STUDENTS USED IN THIS STUDY

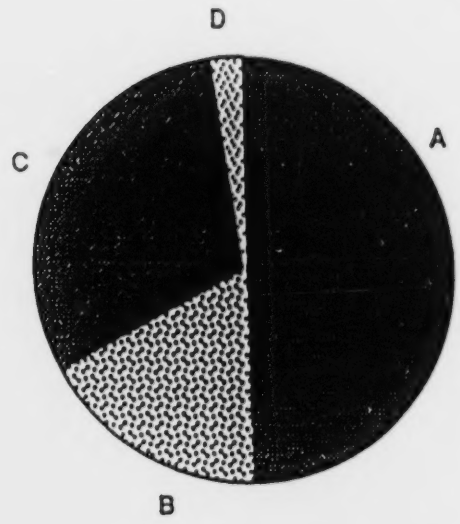
ITEMS	MEAN
Age	22.42
Number of Organizations Belonged to Within the U.S.	4.05
Number of Organizations Belonged to Outside the U.S.	3.69
Number of International Cultural Activities Attended	4.32
Number of Semesters on Campus at this University	8.00

the campus, and the number of semesters they had spent on campus. From Table 1, it can be seen that the average age of the sample was 22.42, their membership in international organizations within the U.S. averaged 4.05, their membership in international organizations outside the U.S. averaged 3.69, and their attendance at international cultural activities averaged 4.32. Furthermore, Table 1 indicates that the sample had an average of eight semesters' attendance.

Figure 7 shows the distribution of the 1,065 U.S. students by their academic discipline of study. Figure 7 shows that 20.7 percent of the sample had a major in business or management, followed by social science (15.1 percent) and engineering (14.8 percent). It can also be seen from Figure 7 that other majors that had higher concentrations of U.S. students were: interdisciplinary studies (6.5 percent); communication (6.5 percent); education (6.0 percent); health professions (4.1 percent); physical science (3.5 percent); psychology (3.5 percent); computer and information science (3.2 percent); biochemistry (2.6 percent); letters (2.4 percent); fine and applied arts (2.1 percent); agriculture and natural resources (1.7 percent); and law (1.2 percent). The areas that were represented with the fewest students were: mathematics (0.9 percent); architecture and environmental design (0.9 percent); public affairs (0.8 percent); foreign language (0.6 percent); and business technologies (0.5 percent). The areas that had the lowest concentrations of students were: home economics, library science, theology, and health services technologies.

FIGURE 7

ACADEMIC FIELD OF STUDY



A	49.8%
B	17.2%
C	30.8%
D	2.2%

A	
BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT	20.7
SOCIAL SCIENCE	15.1
ENGINEERING	14.8
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES	6.5
COMMUNICATION	6.5
EDUCATION	6
B	
HEALTH PROFESSIONS	4.1
PHYSICAL SCIENCE	3.5
PSYCHOLOGY	3.5
COMPUTER AND INFORMATION SCIENCE	3.1
BIO CHEMISTRY	2.5
LETTERS	2.4
FINE AND APPLIED ARTS	2.1
AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES	1.6
LAW	1.2
C	
MATHEMATICS	0.9
ARCHITECTURE AND ENV. SCIENCE	0.9

PUBLIC AFFAIRS	
FOREIGN LANGUAGE	
BUSINESS TECHNOLOGIES	
H. ECO, LIB. SC., THEO., & H. SER. TECH	
D	
NONRESPONDENTS	2

Table 2 shows the travel experience of the U.S. students in this sample. The table indicates that the students averaged the most time in Europe with an average of 10.25 weeks. The next most visited continents were South America and Asia where the students spent an average of 2.87 and 2.15 weeks respectively. U.S. students had shorter stays in the Middle East (0.55) and North America, mostly Canada (0.86). So far as the Pacific Island area is concerned, no U.S. students traveled there.

FINDINGS

The findings displayed in Table 3 show that out of the seven examined variables, six areas are significantly related to the value of international education programs. In given cases--support for internationalism, cultural pluralism, understanding of U.S. culture, worldmindedness, cosmopolitan world outlook, and international career aspirations--the higher the interaction level the more positive the attitudes of U.S. students to those postulated dimensions of outcome of international education. Very importantly, a linear relationship can be seen for these areas which indicates institutional efforts will be concomitantly rewarded.

In looking at the individual mean scores of the postulated dimensions, it can be seen that international education activity has the greatest positive impact in the area of Support for internationalism ($X = 4.50$); cultural pluralism ($X = 4.41$); understanding of U. S. culture ($X = 4.39$); followed closely by worldmindedness ($X = 4.36$) and cosmopolitan world outlook

TABLE 2

DATA ON TIME SPENT IN INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF THE 1,069 U.S. STUDENTS USED IN THIS STUDY

COUNTRY VISITED	MEAN WEEKS
Africa	0.39
Asia	2.15
Europe	10.25
South America	2.87
North America	0.86
Middle East	0.55
Oceania	0.05
Pacific Island Area	0.00

TABLE 3

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE INDICES

GROUP		ONE TO FIVE SEMESTERS	SIX OR MORE SEMESTERS	TOTAL	F RATIO	SIGNIFICANCE
Cosmopolitan World Outlook	N	402	663	1065	8.717	0.0032*
	X	4.18	4.02	4.08		
	SD	0.87	0.86	0.87		
Cultural Pluralism	N	402	663	1065	14.692	0.0001*
	X	4.41	4.18	4.26		
	SD	0.92	1.00	0.97		
Worldmindedness	N	402	663	1065	11.824	0.0006*
	X	4.36	4.22	4.27		
	SD	0.58	0.67	0.63		
Understanding of U.S. Culture	N	402	663	1065	14.884	0.0001*
	X	4.39	4.15	4.24		
	SD	0.94	0.99	0.97		
Support for Internationalism	N	402	663	1065	16.841	0.0000*
	X	4.50	4.26	4.35		
	SD	0.91	1.00	0.97		
International Career Aspirations	N	402	663	1065	8.693	0.0033*
	X	2.65	2.48	2.54		
	SD	0.94	0.92	0.93		
Political Liberalism	N	402	663	1065	0.964	0.3264
	X	3.21	3.17	3.18		
	SD	0.78	0.77	0.77		

*P<.05

(X = 4.18). International career aspirations impacted the least as indicated by the mean of 2.65.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1. U.S. students who spent one to five semesters on campus exhibited more support for internationalism as compared to U.S. students who spend six or more semesters on campus.
2. U. S. students who spend one to five semesters on campus were more world minded as compared to students who spend six or more semesters on campus.
3. U.S.students who spend one to five semesters on campus had more culturally pluralistic attitudes toward international students and international programs as compared to U.S. students who spend six or more semesters on campus.
4. U.S. students who spend one to five semesters on campus had greater understanding of U.S. culture compared to U.S. students who spend six or more semesters on campus as they relate to the activities of international programs.
5. U.S. students who spend one to five semesters on campus had more international career aspirations as compared to U.S. students who spend six or more semesters on campus because of their involvement in international activities on campuses.
6. U. S. students who spend one to five semesters on campus exhibited high interest in international activities as compared to student who spend six or more semesters on campus.
7. Political liberalism was not significant.

CONCLUSION

The general theses of this research sought to establish a positive relationship between the US students' international attitude formation based on the density of international population and institutions involvement in overseas programs especially study abroad programs. US students who interacted with international population on campus and participated in study abroad programs had a high correlation with their international attitude formation. However, a small portion of the US student population seemed to be effected (37 percent). Those US students who were freshman and sophomore (Sharma 1992) or those who spent one to five semesters on campus tend to interact with international students and participate in study abroad programs. They were more cosmopolitan, culturally pluralistic, more worldminded, understood their own culture better, supported internationalism on campus and had international career aspirations as compared to US students (43 percent) who were junior or senior (Sharma 1992) or those who spend six or more semesters on campus.

RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON FINDINGS

1. There should be more encouragement of U.S. students, especially of those who spend six or more semesters on campus to take advantage of study abroad programs.
2. The federal government, foundations, and nonprofit organizations in the U.S. that are committed to increasing the international awareness of U.S. students should continue to support financially the promotion of international

educational activities.

3. There should be more research to develop a mechanism on how to integrate international and U.S. students on campuses. Institutions and policy makers should study ways to enhance the educational experience of both international and U.S. students. U.S. educational institutions in particular should promote activities to encourage and to maintain a higher degree of cultural interaction between all genders and races thus promoting cultural diversity on campuses.

4. There is a need to replicate this research.

This study supports the position of Burn (1980) and Atbach, Kelly and Lulat (1985). Burn pointed out a decade ago that it is possible for international education to take on cosmetic aspects rather than substantially bridging cultures. Atbach, Kelly and Lulat (1985) commented that:

> It may be well that the "internationalizing" influence that high level administrators so often speak when called upon to justify the presence of international students on their campus is merely well-meaning rhetoric ... it is likely that only those within the campus and off-campus communities already included toward internationalizing their knowledge and life experience (usually a small minority) make the effort to know and interact with international students. The vast majority, on the other hand, prefer to remain aloof and uninvolved. Or it could be that the appropriate communication structures (constructed through creative programming) are simply lacking, and hence the potential for an internalizing influence from the presence of international students goes unrealized. (.36)

Therefore, US educational institutions who are serious about international education need to rephrase the goals and methods of international educational by reordering educational priorities in according to the needs of the modern world.

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